

**VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Montpelier Room, Capital Plaza Conference Center, 100 State Street, Montpelier**  
**December 15, 2009**

*The State Board and Department of Education provide support and leadership  
in the transformation of the Vermont education system in order to give each learner the opportunity to  
succeed in the 21st century.*

**Approved MINUTES**

**Present: Board Members:** Fayneese Miller, Chair; Ruth Stokes, Vice-Chair; Kathy Larsen, Vice-Chair; Alex Melville; Judy Livingston; Stephen Morse; Brian Vachon; Robert Kelley; John Hall; Don Collins;

**DOE:** Commissioner Armando Vilaseca; Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf; Mark Oettinger; Carol King; Jill Remick; Susan Marks; Ernie Wheeler; Kate Larose; Ann Bordonaro; Karin Edwards; Bill Talbott; Doug Webster; Greg Glennon; Marta Cambra;

**Others:** Jeff Francis, VSA; John Nelson, VSBA; Sherry Gile, VTNEA; Kalee Roberts, VSBA; Tom James; Curtis Reed, VPFD; Sandy Croft, Essex Town SB; Kim Gleason, ETSB; Jim Fitzpatrick, Essex Town SD Daniel Michelson, ACT; Adrienne Fischer, Sandy Bartley, Michael Giangreco, Vt. Special Education Advisory Council; Kevin O'Connor, Rutland Herald; Tom James; Kristin Bristow, ANWSU; Tom O'Brien, ANWSU; Laura Soares, Teri Geney, Karrin Wilks, Mike Deweese, Martha Tucker, Kyle Weinreich, Retta Dunlap, Christ Koliba, Bill Romond, Kay Charron, Policy Commission; Janet Steward, VSBPE; Gary Gilbert, Peter Peltz, House Educ. Comm.; Ken Page, VPA

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The current month's meeting agenda and packet materials may be accessed electronically at:  
<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#packet>

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**Preliminaries**

**Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance**

Fayneese Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Item B: Roll Call and Introductions**

Board members introduced themselves, as did members of the audience.

**Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates (Chair, Board Members)**

There were no updates or announcements.

**Item D: November Summary**

Chair Miller noted the summary of the November meeting.

**Item E: Public to be Heard**

John Nelson, Vermont School Boards Association, spoke to the Board about the recent memo from Commissioner Vilaseca and Commissioner Jim Reardon regarding school budget

reductions. He and his organization expressed concern about the contents of the memo, as they shift the cost burden to schools. He wanted to know if those were the Legislative priorities of the Board as well. He also wanted to know why the letter did not include helpful suggestions.

Sandy Croft of the Essex School Board presented a resolution (see text attached) from the Essex Town Supervisory District Board to the State Board asking the Board for permission to hire a permanent superintendent.

Kalee Roberts of the Vermont School Boards Association stated the anticipated cost-shift that would happen as a result of the legislation suggested in the Commissioners' memo, specifically with respect to state-placed students.

Curtiss Reed, Director of the Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity, spoke to the Board about school safety and the responsibility of local administrators to fulfill their responsibilities under the law to protect students under Act 91.

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#### **Item F: Commissioner's Update**

Armando Vilaseca spoke to the Board about the ongoing internal reorganization of the DOE. RttT and the Budget will be addressed in later agenda items. He chaired the final Education Finance and Effectiveness Legislative Committee on Monday, noting that any potential legislation will require all supervisory unions to have similar requirements.

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#### **Item G: Strategic Plan Development (Strategic Planning Sub-Committee)**

Deputy Commissioner Rae Ann Knopf explained that the committee had met several times and, using the work of the previous committees, had developed the draft for today's discussion. She noted that next steps would include the development of an implementation plan that supports the work of the department.

Brian Vachon noted the process used to get to this point: Review of the mission and vision statements; the Roots of Success study results; the Education Transformation Policy Commission reports; work of prior committees. Anne Bordonaro reviewed the goals as developed by the committee: Leadership, Standards & Assessment, Instructional Practices & Environments, and Policy & Governance.

Stephan Morse noted that the current draft brought the strategic plan back up to a higher level, and would be supported by the development of an implementation plan. He urged the Board to move ahead and direct the department to begin work on the implementation plan.

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#### **Action Items**

##### **Item H: Consent Agenda**

**Motion:** Don Collins moved, Alex Melville seconded, to approve the consent agenda with comment. Ruth Stokes questioned if the Legislature would appropriate the capital construction funds as outlined. Bill Talbott said it is hard to know.

##### **Item H – Consent Agenda**

##### **1. Minutes of November 17, 2009 SBE Meeting**

## **2. Annual Construction Aid Budget Request & Prioritized School Construction List (Cathy Hilgendorf; Bill Talbott)**

The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

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### **Item I: Essex Town School District: Supervisory Union Boundary Study (Armando Vilaseca; Mark Oettinger)**

Commissioner Vilaseca recommended the Board allow Essex Town to hire a superintendent and to not change the structure at this time. He read a prepared statement (see attached) outlining that he does think this would be the right thing to do, but to do it at this time is not strategic decision. He reiterated his belief that this is a topic that must be dealt with on a statewide basis. Some Board members expressed concern about the recommended action because the results of the study are compelling and support the change.

**Motion:** Kathy Larsen moved, seconded by Brian Vachon, that the State Board of Education vote to not regroup the Essex Town Supervisory District at this time. The Essex Town Supervisory District Board may proceed with its process to hire a new permanent superintendent  
Motion passed 8-1(Morse)

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### **Item J: Addison Northwest SU: Unified Union District Articles of Agreement (Kristin Bristow, Chair, ANW Unified Union Study Committee; Tom O'Brien, Superintendent of Schools, ANWSU; Mark Oettinger, General Counsel)**

Kristin Bristow, Chair, ANW Unified Union Study Committee, explained that this was not a new item for the State Board as the ANWSU Board had proposed similar action three years ago and received the State Board's approval to move forward. At that time, however, voters voted down the recommendations. Vilaseca noted that this request is in line with the Board's and his work to reduce the number of school districts for greater efficiency. Vilaseca did note that while this is not a preferred method of creating efficiencies, it is a step in the right direction. Board members asked questions about what steps had been taken to address concerns raised at public forums.

**Motion:** Don Collins moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, that the State Board find that the formation of the Addison Northwest Unified Union School District is in the best interests of the students, the state, and the school districts involved and therefore vote to approve the attached report of the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union Unified Union School District Planning Committee, as agreed upon October 6, 2009. Motion passed unanimously (9-0).

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### **Item K: Ratification of Hearing Officer Decision: Greenwood School (Kathy Larsen; Greg Glennon, Esq.)**

At 11:01, p.m., Kathy Larsen moved, seconded by Brian Vachon, to move into to executive session to discuss Item K. Included in the executive session were Greg Glennon and Vaughn Altemus.

At 11:31 a.m., the Board came out of executive session.

**Motion:** Alex Melville moved, seconded by Stephan Morse, that the State Board vote to adopt the Hearing Officer's Recommended Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Decision,

regarding the rate appeal of the Greenwood School. The motion was approved unanimously (9-0).

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### **Discussion Items**

**Item L: Special Education Advisory Council** (Ernie Wheeler, DOE; Adrienne Fischer, Sandy Bartley, Michael Giangreco, Special Education Advisory Council members)  
Adrienne Fischer, Sandy Bartley, Michael Giangreco of the Vermont Special Education Advisory Council, spoke to the Board about Least Restrictive Environments and a commitment to meeting the fiscal responsibilities of special education. They stated that the current funding system may actually encourage the wrong kinds of practices, such as the use of paraprofessionals, in schools.

### **Item M:**

#### **1. FY 2010 Budget and FY 2011 Budget Development** (Bill Talbott)

Bill Talbott spoke to the Board about the FY 2010 Budget and the line item for State Board expenses. Budget submissions are due to the Administration within the week. The Board will review and vote on the FY 2011 proposal at its January 19, 2010 meeting.

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### **Lunch**

Members of the Education Transformation Policy Commission joined the Board for lunch.

Following lunch, Commissioner Armando Vilaseca read a resolution (see text attached) honoring Kay Charron, who retired from the Department of Education on November 30.

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### **Transformation of Education**

#### **Item N: Education Transformation Policy Commission: Report and Recommendations** (Policy Commission members; Kay Charron, Project Director)

Commission members introduced themselves and outlined the report for the Board. They answered questions from the Board. The key communication message about regionalization is that it is not to save money but about providing options for students. Board and commission members discussed the regionalization piece of the policy commission recommendations and took questions from the audience. Stokes suggested using the report to garner funding to implement the changes. The Board applauded the commission for its work.

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### **ITEM M (continued)**

#### **3. ARRA/RTTT – Update**

Rae Ann Knopf updated the Board on the Race to the Top application. Vermont will apply in Round 2.

#### **4. Legislative Agenda Development**

Mark Oettinger spoke about potential Legislative agenda items and the Policy Commission Report as a blueprint for DOE organization.

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## **Concluding**

**Item O: Future Agendas, Wrap Up and Adjourn** (Board members, Armando Vilaseca, Carol King)

King reviewed the list for January, adding items from the day's discussion. She noted that the April meeting will be on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and that the June meeting will be scheduled for the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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## **Adjourn**

**Motion:** At 3:38 p.m., Don Collins moved, seconded by Judy Livingston, to adjourn the December 15, 2009 State Board of Education meeting. The motion passed unanimously (9-0).

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## **Item E:**

### **Essex Town School Board Resolution December 14, 2009**

Whereas the Essex Town School District has been a supervisory school district since July 1, 1978 and;

Whereas students in the Essex Town School District have consistently performed at a high level in student assessments and;

Whereas the electorate of Essex Town has considered various options of consolidation and/or unification over the past ten years, including a unified K – 12 school district with member districts within Chittenden Central Supervisory Union and;

Whereas the Essex Town electorate voted to maintain its status as a independent supervisory district in 2007 by a vote of 901-561 and;

Whereas the Essex Town School Board has not found, nor has been presented with evidence, that joining another supervisory union would lead to significant financial savings to the taxpayer or further improvement to student outcomes;

Whereas the Essex Town School District and the Chittenden Central Supervisory Union would have very limited time to plan for staffing changes and implementation of assignment and/or consolidation with Chittenden Central Supervisory Union and;

Whereas the Essex Town School Board would like to maintain its status as an independent supervisory school district with employing a full-time superintendent;

Now therefore the Essex Town School Board resolves that it requests that the State Board of Education provide it the authority to fill its Superintendent's position which will be vacant beginning July 2010.

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## **Resolution in Honor of Kay Charron on the Occasion of Her Retirement from the Department of Education**

Today, we reflect on and honor your long, distinguished, and effective career in state government, and we offer appreciation for the personal qualities and commitment that have always characterized your service.

When you arrived at the Department of Education in the spring of 1992, you had already forged a record of accomplishment in state government, beginning in the mid-1970s. In Richard Snelling's first administration, you were the prime mover in establishing and directing Vermont's path-breaking Certified Public Manager Program in the Department of Personnel. You hired John Turner (later of DOE) as 'co-conspirator' in this well-respected training program for middle managers. A highlight: the "Team Vermont" conference during Madeline Kunin's administration, attended by 300 managers, when you persuaded Tom Peters to be the keynote speaker, and to waive his customary \$15,000 fee. In earlier state service, as shown in your tenure here, you welcomed and collaborated with others whose views and approaches differed from yours, always with the commitment to keep your eye on the prize.

At the Department, you have shepherded effective programs in adult education and career and technical education (for example, working closely with Doug Webster to implement industry certification and assessment), and have provided significant leadership in the Office of Lifelong Learning – of which you are a striking example! Your legacy includes an important role in the passage and subsequent implementation of Act 176 of 2005, the "High School Completion Program." As your work here has shaped the path to careers and higher education for students, we see your work as a higher calling. You have played a formative role in the initial planning, with Carol Duley and Tina Muncy, in the New England Secondary School Consortium, joining Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Your most recent endeavor here – and potentially the most far-reaching – has been to serve as the skilled, resourceful, visionary, and collaborative Project Director for the Transformation Policy Commission, whose final report and recommendations are fittingly on today's State Board agenda.

A life-long Vermonter and graduate of Montpelier High School and UVM, you have brought valued, far-reaching educational research and practices from a wide range of sources – within and beyond Vermont – to bear on challenges faced by the Department, schools and parents, the State Board, and the legislature. Working within the system, you have strongly and effectively welcomed change, mindful of the creative tensions and risks that change brings.

You have a rare blend of personal and professional qualities ... you are bright, dedicated, collegial in your approach to work, trustworthy, candid, gracious, and unpretentious. While you are unassuming, the strength and breadth of your character and commitments are abundant and abiding. You leaven your presence with deep humor, smiles, and laughter. Your constancy and commitment to colleagues and to educational innovation are legendary.

We sense that, in retirement, you may engage with life-long interests: working in the woods, wood-working, pick-up truck and motorcycle riding (though perhaps not across the country as in the past), reading by the fire, and house construction and renovation. We have clearly felt the great joy and commitment that you and Arlene have for the young adopted lad, Patrick. Pat Fitzsimmons, a colleague, offers the following.

“If a child is to keep his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement, and mystery of the world we live in.” ~ Rachel Carson. Your companionship, wisdom, and joy will be essential guides for Patrick. We extend our gratitude for all you have done with us and offer our best wishes on the path ahead.

For the Department and State Board of Education,

Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner

Fayneese Miller, Chair

Montpelier, Vermont, December 15, 2009